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ABSTRACT

This document contains three symposium papers on workplace diversity issues. "Expanding Theories of Career Development: Adding the Voices of African American Women in the White Academy" (Mary V. Alfred) questions the validity of existing career development models for women and minority groups and examines the professional development of five tenured African American women at predominantly white research universities in a study based on a life history approach. "The Relationship between Selected Variables on Diversity and the Implementation of Diversity as Successful Corporate Culture Change Programs" (Clarence E. Whittenburg, Dennis G. Tesolowski, Melissa H. Marcus, Clinton H. Isbell) reports the results of a study that support the theory that work force diversity initiatives closely aligned with affirmative action initiatives are more likely to result in backlash than those aligned with managing diversity as a business necessity. "Diversity Practitioners--Learning from Experience! Defining the Role and Related Competencies in an Emerging Field of Practice" (Terrence E. Maltbia) describes the process used to test the development and utility of a qualitative research model designed to improve understanding of the competency development process for diversity practitioners doing pioneer work in organizations. (MN)

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4 **Workplace Diversity Issues**

Chair: Robert L. Dilworth, Virginia Commonwealth University

4 - 1 Expanding Theories of Career Development: Adding the Voices of African American Women in the White Academy

Mary V. Alfred, Central Texas College

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Rose Mary Wentling, University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign

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4 - 3 Relationship Between Selected Variables on Diversity and the Implementation of Diversity as Successful Corporate Culture Change Programs

Clarence E. Whittenberg, Sealed Air Corporation

Melissa H. Marcus, Clemson University

Dennis G. Tesolowski, Clemson University

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4 - 4 Diversity Practitioners—Learning From Experience! Defining the Role and Related Competencies in an Emerging Field of Practice

Terrence E. Maltbia, Columbia University

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Expanding Theories of Career Development: Adding the Voices of African American Women in the White Academy

Mary V. Alfred
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Many theorists have proposed models to explain career development. However, the appropriateness of these models for women and minority groups is being questioned. Changes in the composition of the workforce, to include the increased number of minority professionals in White dominated institutions, call for new ways of theorizing career development. Using a bicultural lens, this paper examines the professional development of five tenured African American women in the White academy.

Keywords: Career Development, Biculturalism, Black Women

Traditional career development theories, upon which many organizational career development programs are based, have been widely criticized for their exclusion of minority voices and for generalizing the White male developmental experience to that of minority groups (Cheatham, 1990; Kerka, 1992; Thomas & Alderfer, 1989). Samples used in the development of career theories are usually predominantly white middle class males, yet the results of those studies are used to explain choice and behavior among African Americans and other minority groups. As Cheatham (1990) argues,

> These theories and instrumentations incorporate no observations of (a) African Americans' considerable experience with structural or racial discrimination, (b) culturally-influenced perceptions of the meaning of work, (c) differential availability of career information and guidance, and (d) economics and labor market forces that affect African Americans differently. (p. 335)

Thomas & Alderfer (1989) confirmed, however, that the statistics on occupational status of racial minority groups suggest that race is a strong predictor of position in the labor market and career patterns. Despite that fact, traditional career models tend to ignore race as an important variable that influences and hinders career development of individuals in organizations.

Culture and Career

Although race is an important variable in the study of career development of minority groups, it cannot be examined outside of its cultural context. To do so would mean, for example, that there is a universal Black race that shares a monolithic culture. The study of career development, therefore, must incorporate the personal, cultural, and the structural contexts of the experience. According to Van Maanen and Barley (1985), "culture mediates between structure and individual realm" (p. 35). The cultural perspective will serve to integrate the psychological or personal perspectives of career with the sociological and structural aspects of organizations (Derr & Laurent, 1989). Not surprisingly, Deer & Laurent (1989), Schein, (1977, 1984a), Wood (1991), among others, propose that a cultural framework would best capture the social reality of developing careers.

Derr and Laurent (1989) note that career development theories tend to be fragmented, focusing on one variable at the neglect of others. Barley (1989), Derr & Laurent (1989), Kerka, (1992), Schein, (1978), Van Maanen (1977) and Wood, (1991)) agree that careers have both a subjective and an objective component and that both components must be integrated to capture the totality of the career. Schein (1975, 1993) conceptualizes the subjective career as the internal career and the objective career as the external career. Schein (1996) describes the internal career as an individual's self-definition of a career and is the person's interpretation of her work life and her roles within it. The external career, on the other hand, represents the formal stages and roles that are defined by organizational policies and societal expectations of occupational structures (p. 1).

In his study of careers, Schein (1977) found that most people form a strong self-concept that holds their internal career together even as they experience problems and changes in their external career. Hence his concept of "career anchors." According to Schein (1996, p. 2), a person's career anchor is his or her self-concept consisting of (1) self-perceived talents and abilities, (2) basic values, and most important, (3) the evolve sense of motives and

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needs as they pertain to the career.... Once the self-concept is formed, it functions as a stabilizing force, hence the metaphor of "anchor" and can be thought of as the values and motives that the person will not give up if forced to make a choice. Wood (1991) also notes, "the very idea of self-concept is culture bound" (p. 25). Therefore, in order to examine the self-concept and its role in career development, we must situate developmental experiences within a cultural context. Using a bicultural lens, this study examined the professional development experiences of five tenured Black women in the research academy. The purpose of the study was to explore the developmental experiences that contributed to their successful career in the White academy. The following questions guided the initial study:

1. How do Black women's early developmental experiences in the Black subculture and in the White dominant societal culture influence their professional development?
2. How do Black tenured female faculty interpret their experiences in the White-dominated culture of the research academy?
3. What adaptive strategies do Black female faculty employ to manage the White academic culture?

This paper focuses primarily on the perceived determinants of success (defined by tenure and promotion) among five African American tenured female faculty members at a predominantly White university in the Southwest. While the data point to the underrepresentation and to the poor status of Black women in higher education, little attention has been given to the successful women who have made it against all the odds.

Status of African American Women in the Academy

African American female faculty continues to be under represented in White dominated research universities (Carter & Wilson, 1992; National Center for Education Statistics, 1994). According to the 1993 Digest on Education Statistics, Black faculty comprised 4.7 percent of all full-time instructional faculty in higher education. Black women faculty made up 2.2 percent of the full-time faculty. Black women faculty who are associate and full-time professors made up 0.6 percent full-time faculty and 1.2 percent of all associate and full professors (p. 227). In addition, the National Study of Post Secondary Faculty (1994) revealed that 1.2 percent of the positions in public research universities and 1.3 percent of the positions in public doctoral universities were held by Black women (p. 15).

From the data, one can conclude that Black women are almost invisible in public research and doctoral universities. Those who are able to enter these institutions, however, find themselves at the bottom of the hierarchy and are among the least likely to be tenured (Collins, 1986; Howard-Vital, 1987; Silver, 1988). Furthermore, several researchers alert us to the negative experiences of Black female faculty as they struggle to gain access, inclusion, and tenure in white institutions of higher education (Granger, 1993; Humphrey-Brown, 1997; James & Farmer, 1993; Lopez, 1991; Smith, 1992). These writers speak of the alienation, isolation, and social marginalization that Blacks experience in predominantly White institutions. Despite these problems, some women have achieved tenure and promotion, becoming professionals of high regard at their institutions. It is critical, therefore, that the literature that informs career decisions in organizations include theories that address this group's career development experiences.

Theoretical Perspective

African Americans face the dilemma of double consciousness as they struggle to survive in two distinct cultural worlds--one White and one Black (DuBois, 1903; Hopkins, 1987). The Black life world consists of the Black community with its demands and expectations of professional women. The White life world is made up of the White institutional structures--the school and the workplace--within which African American women must interact and survive in order to be professionals.

To understand the historical process of these women's interactional experiences in their bicultural life worlds, I drew on bicultural life structure theory to guide the study. The bicultural perspective focuses attention on the interplay between the two cultures and its effects on the lives of racial minority workers (Jones, 1986). Wolfe, O'Connor, and Cary (1990) define life structure as

> the underlying pattern or design of a person's life at any given time.... The life structure is the bridge between one's inner workings and the demands of society, and is the product of both

> forces. It is the connection between self and circumstances.... It allows one to adapt to one's surroundings. (p. 958)

Valentine (1971) suggests that the bicultural model is best suited for the study of African American behavior within the mainstream culture. He further notes,

> The collective behavior and social life of the Black community is bicultural in the sense that each Afro-American ethnic segment draws upon both a distinctive repertoire of standardized Afro-American group behavior, and simultaneously, patterns derived from the mainstream cultural system of Euro-American derivation. Socializations into both systems begin at an early age and continue throughout life, and are generally of equal importance in most individual lives.... The idea of biculturation helps explain how people learn and practice both mainstream culture and ethnic culture at the same time. (p. 143)

A bicultural life structure allows the Black woman to hold on to her African American identity as she interacts with the White-dominated culture.

Methodological Perspective

Kent Seibert (1996) notes that people do not learn from their experience alone. He suggests that learning comes from the interpretation of the experiences. Therefore, to understand the process by which African American women make meaning of their professional development experiences in white-dominated institutions, I drew on the interpretive interactionist perspective. Habermas (1971) calls this the historical-hermeneutic paradigm. As Chovanec (1996) explains, "it is a study of the subjective and everyday experiences of human beings from their own point of view. In interpretive research, the emphasis of the study is on the meanings and interpretations of social worlds. The intent is to tap into complex social interactions and explore the subjective experience of the phenomenon" (p. 56). The interpretive paradigm, therefore, focuses on the participants' interpretation of their experiences.

Method

This study took a biographical or life history approach as each participant and I attempted the reconstruction of her bicultural lives to discover the sociostructural experiences contributing to her successful career in the White academy. Each woman's sociostructural experiences result from her interactions with the sociostructural life worlds of family, community, institution, and the wider society. In order to understand the totality of the women's experiences, I examined each life within its sociocultural contexts. Patricia Collins (1990) clearly articulated that the African American female cannot be viewed outside the context of family, community, and culture (p. 25). The interview guide was purposefully constructed to examine the career development experience as an integrated whole stemming from a multiplicity of experience occurring within various sociostructural contexts. The call for the study of career development as an integrated whole has been made by several researchers to include Derr & Laurent (1989), Hall (1996), Hall & Mirvis (1996). Hall (1996), for example, notes

> What is needed in career theory and practice is a more holistic view of the individual, one that encompasses all spheres of activity and all corresponding facets of personal identity. When we look at career and occupational experiences later in the individual's life, we need to see these experiences in the context of that individual's total life, encompassing all other important current roles and subidentities as well as hopes and dreams for the future. (p. 7)

The participants for this study consisted of five tenured African American female faculty from a major White research university in the southwest. The five study participants--Elizabeth, Jean, Kendra, Myra, and Sara--made up the total population of African American tenured female faculty at that institution. They ranged in ages 45 - 51 and came from diverse disciplines--Journalism, Social Work, Anthropology, and Engineering.

Analytical Techniques

To understand and interpret the historical experiences contributing to the professional experiences of African American female faculty in White research universities, I analyzed the data in three ways. First, I did a case analysis

of each woman's story and constructed a narrative of her experiences. Each case analysis and narrative was sent to participants for member check. Second, I isolated each significant experience and situated it within the sociostructural context of family, community, institution, and society. Third, I did a cross case analysis to discover the common themes in the participants' developmental experiences.

Overview of Findings

The results of a study of Black women's professional development in White dominated institutions suggests that the families built the foundation for the women's professional development by providing them with a nurturing environment within which to develop, high expectations and support to meet expectations, and a set of legacies or messages that sustained them in their professional development journeys. The Black community augmented each family's contribution by providing opportunities for Black self-definition, knowledge acquisition, and visibility. The White societal culture, through its privileged academic institutions, provided opportunities to fulfill dreams of professional careers. The study finds that although the White dominant culture was sometimes hostile and alienating, the women persevered knowing that opportunities for professional careers existed in that culture.

From the academic institutional life world, participants found support from the top levels of the administration and tenure support from their schools, from mentors, or from their professional organizations. They encountered enhancing opportunities to contribute to university and student affairs and for increasing their visibility in the academy. Among the disabling experiences were multiple role expectations, alienation from both institution and community, lack of support from colleagues, especially Black colleagues, and experiences of racism.

Discussion: Determinants of Success in the White Academy

The study results indicate that participants found success in the White culture through (1) positive self-definition in creating positive images and rejecting society's stereotypical images of themselves as Black women, (2) safe space, (3) knowledge of the culture and its role expectations, (4) visibility promoted by mentors and through participation in professional organizations; and (5) a fluid life structure that allows them to float in and out of various cultural and socioeconomic life worlds.

The Power of Self-definition

One of the most illuminating findings of this study is the role of positive self-definition in the participants' management of White-dominated cultures. "The basis for self-definition is one's sphere of influence from which self-concept grows" (Kerka, 1992, p. 3). Ella Louise Bell (1987) suggests that the Black woman's cultural affiliations have a definite impact on the development of her identity.

Analysis of the participants' developmental experiences suggest that the school, together with the family and the Black community, contributed greatly to building positive definition of the Black self. The Black schools, during the period of segregation, functioned not only as a transmitter of knowledge, but they had the expressed functions of building self-esteem, self-efficacy, and of preparing students to enter and to become successful in the White world. These were accomplished partly through implicit and explicit messages about Black self-worth. Core themes running through their messages were that they were just as good as Whites and their Black skin did not make them inferior. Jean's band director, for example, was very influential in the development of her Black cultural identity and positive self-worth. As she recalled,

> My band director was an influence on all of us in the band because he would talk to us about getting better than what we are, but it was always in reference to White people. He always talked about advancing and improving ourselves because we were Black, and you know, we had to be better.

Parents and community members transmitted similar messages about being Black in a predominantly White society. They prepared the youth for the debilitating experiences they might encounter in the White world. Kendra's parents, for example, told her, "you will experience racism, and you will be in situations where people will not want to sit next to you. Do not worry about it; remember that you are just as good as they are. The only difference is the color of your skin."

Although they were confronted with White domination and oppression during a period of total segregation, African Americans adopted what Collins (1991) and hooks (1990) call *a culture of resistance* in order to create a social reality of Black equality and positive cultural identity. Consequently, the participants, through implicit and explicit messages from family, community, and school, developed a cultural identity that formed a lens through which they viewed themselves in relation to Whites. They did not see themselves as inferior to White people, but as different from them, and that difference did not make them inferior. This perception of "different but equal" was found to be critical to the participants' perception of their place in the academic institutional culture.

Use of Safe Space

The use of a safe space was found to be a method by which the women preserve their constructed definition of self when the environment becomes disconcerting. According to Ward (1995),

> The safe space serves as a prime location for the Black woman to resist objectification as the Other. In safe spaces, as domination is seldom the prevailing operative, Black women may, theoretically, freely function and do or be that which she pleases. (p. 153)

Ward (1995) also notes that the predominantly White institution does not provide any inside safe spaces wherein Black women are truly free to develop and express their self-constructed knowledge of their Black womanhood. The findings from this study do, however, indicate that the participants were able to identify and access places or people in the Black community where their objectification as the Other was minimized. bell hooks (1990) refers to these safe spaces as "homeplace." She describes homeplace as

> a safe place where Black people could affirm one another and by so doing heal many of the wounds inflicted by racist domination.... We can make homeplace that space where we return for renewal and self-recovery, where we can heal our wounds and become whole. (p. 42)

Elizabeth, for example, resists institutional marginalization by retreating to the safe place she has created in her home. As she explained,

> I won't allow myself to feel marginal at this university. I guess if this meant more to me, if it were my whole life, then perhaps I may have a different view of it; but it's only part of my life.... I love my work, but this is not my main life.... I am very happy with my family. I have my husband and my daughter and we are very happy; we have lots of fun together. We have a beautiful home to come to. This is not my only reality. When this becomes too much, I can go home and forget it, at least for a while.

Sara's safe space, on the other hand, consists of her childhood neighborhood where she grew up within an all Black academic community. Going back to her community gives her a sense of wholeness and reminds her of the support, the love, and the safety she received from the family and community. This is particularly important to Sara as she works in an environment where she sometimes feels like an outsider. As she explained,

> I think the times I feel like an outsider are really when I go to meetings in which I don't know anybody else, like some of the committees that I serve on. Sometimes I go, and I get the feeling when I walk in that there is a surprise that I am there. I hear some of the interactions that suggest that some of the other faculty attending these meetings know one another. Those are the times that I feel like an outsider because I don't know anything about them, and they don't know anything about me.... When we go home, there is such a feeling of well being. It feels good to be there. We still know the people, and they know me because of my father. The neighborhood is still predominantly Black. I try to go back at least once a year to get back in touch with who I am and from where I came.

Retreating to a safe space is a method of resistance that Black women embrace to escape forces of oppression prevalent in the dominant society. The immediate and extended family, churches, African American community organizations, and even the individual psyche have been found to be important locations where African

Americans retreat to safety. This safe place becomes a house of refuge where Black women can reconstruct any image of herself that has been threatened as a result of her interactions within White dominated institutions.

The Power of Knowledge

The power of knowledge was found to be very significant to Black women's career development in an academic culture that professes the pursuit, creation, and disbursement of knowledge. The findings indicate that knowledge of the academic culture and knowledge of role expectations contributes to Black women's ability to meet cultural expectations.

Knowledge of Academic Culture

The culture of the academic profession is based on the concepts and symbols of academic freedom, the community of scholars, collegial governance, individual autonomy, and service of society through the production of knowledge, the transmission of culture, and education of the young (Clark, 1984). Participants placed great emphasis on the importance of cultural knowledge in successfully managing the academic culture. Their knowledge of the culture was first enhanced through their role performance as teaching and/or research assistants and through relationships with mentors and other significant members of the culture. Elizabeth, for example, said that her mentor was grooming her for the academic career and giving her a visual imagery of the academic culture. As she explained,

> He was bringing me along, even though at the time, I didn't know that's what he was doing.... He gave me a picture that exemplified an ideal of wouldn't this be great, working with ideas, working with graduate students. Wouldn't this be great not to have a full-time job?

By working with her mentor, she had a picture of life in academy. Elizabeth further suggested,

> During the Ph.D. program, you need to get a teaching assistantship or a research assistantship, a job that will connect you with other professors if that is possible. Those of us who had jobs within the university were the insiders; we knew the faculty, and we knew the culture.

Through their relationships with significant members of the culture, the participants learned its rules and expectations, and such knowledge facilitated their membership into the culture. Myra, in referring to her present institution, noted, "I don't feel like an outsider in the university because I understand how things run here." Her knowledge of the way things work enables her to successfully manage expectations of the job.

The socialization process of the five study participants was facilitated through their participation as students and through their insiders' positions as assistants and proteges of influential members within the culture. Their early interactions with significant members of the culture gave them a competitive advantage for developing the competency necessary to successfully meet cultural expectations.

Knowledge of Role Expectations

Research studies on the process of tenure in research universities often reveal the lack of knowledge that participants have about the process. Menges and Exum (1983), for example, note that many faculty say that the criteria are unclear, inappropriate, or unrealistic. In a more recent study of junior faculty's perception of the tenure process in research universities, Verrier (1992) found many of the participants were unclear about the process, had a preoccupation with knowing where they stand in the process, and had a craving for specific indices or clearly defined road maps. Contrary to the findings of his study, this study found that the women had clear knowledge of the cultural expectations with regards to the tenure process. They knew the political workings of the process.

The women came in to the academy with the awareness of its cultural rules. Although they found some of the rules inappropriate, they chose to follow the rules to ensure their success in the culture. When Jean and I were discussing the issue of cultural expectations, she said,

> I always said, even before I went up for tenure, I know the rules of this game that I have chosen to enter, like them or not, these are the rules. If I want to succeed in this system, then I have to abide by the rules.... Know the rules and play the game by the rules.

Knowledge of the rules enhanced Jean's ability to meet the expectations that guided the tenure process. Myra also articulated the importance of playing the game by the rules. She said, "There are rules, follow the rules." To Myra, knowing the culture and its expectations means knowing not only the explicit but also the implicit expectations that the culture has of Black women. She noted, "You really have to do what you are supposed to do, and you have to do a lot of it because being an African-American, people are gunning for you. Practically everybody is gunning at you." Myra is suggesting that the Black woman should exceed cultural expectations in order to avoid the guns of others in the academy. The message, "in order to be equal, you have to be better," is part of her ancestral legacy and it is a constant life script after which the professional Black woman patterns her life.

The Power of Visibility

Although Black women are rendered invisible by virtue of their femaleness and their Blackness, successful Black women are rendered highly visible by their institutions. As one participant said, "The University has my face plastered all over campus." The development of visibility started in the family and community life worlds, was promoted in the White institution through mentoring relationships, and enhanced by the employing institution and through the women's participation in regional, national, and international organizations. The resulting effects of such visibility are the opportunities they provide for career development and enhancement.

Kendra noted that one's visibility within her academic community becomes crucial at review time. She said,

> You need to be visible in the community that you say you are an expert in. You need to be visible at your national conferences and in your publications. They ask other people who are experts in the field, "What do you know about this person?"

The findings suggest that for one to become powerful in the academy, she has to be known, and in order to be known, she must be visible within her professional community.

Fluid Life Structure and Bicultural Competence

An individual's mode of participation within her various sociostructural life worlds depends upon the fluidity or rigidity of the life structure. This study found that the participants' success in the academy is partly due to their fluid life structure, which enables them to float in and out of their various sociocultural groups. By having a fluid life structure, the participants were able to navigate their bicultural worlds with little of the strain and stress Bell (1987) found associated with biculturalism. They saw their bicultural lives as interconnected rather than separated. When I asked Kendra, for example, about the duality of her life, she said,

> No, I don't have a dual life. This is all my life. What I am finding is that we may have some cultural uniqueness, but what has brought us together is our work. My professional and personal life is just a continuum.

Jean, on the other hand, agreed that she had a Black life and a White life, but she did not see any distinct separation between the two. As she remarked, "I guess there is a Black life and a White life. Work is White and everything else is Black, meaning social contacts and all that, but that is all my life; I cannot distinctly separate the two."

Sara's comments also indicate her inability to distinctly separate her world into a Black world bounded off by a White world. She noted,

> When I go home, it is really totally apart from the university world. What I am in my private life at home, I am still connected to the university in a sense that I am writing and doing things related to my work. I am just not connected on a social basis.... I think I am a part of both worlds. It is hard to separate the two. It is all my world.

Seelye (1994) suggests that a truly bicultural person acknowledges that she is not merely 50 percent X and 50 percent Y, but unique blends of X and Y with a variety of successful behaviors to choose from when dealing with X's and Y's (p. 29). He notes that the bicultural person does not deny the influence of one or another culture on her character but sees her life as a composite of all experiences originating from her various life worlds.

The power of Black women to pattern their mode of interactions to fit their Black and White life worlds is what La Fromboise and Associates (1993) term bicultural competence. They suggest that individuals living in two cultures may find the experience to be more beneficial than living in a monocultural lifestyle (p. 402). They also note that to be biculturally competent, one must possess a substantial degree of personal integration and individuation to avoid the negative consequences of a bicultural living situation. The participants of this study were found to have high self-esteem and Black cultural identity, elements that Seelye (1994) finds necessary for becoming biculturally competent.

Conclusion

The findings from this study support Schein's (1978, 1993) theory of internal and external careers and his concept of career anchor. Much of the dimensions of the developing career that emerged from the study can be organized as the internal or external career. Schein's notion of internal career represents the individual's career self-concept or the meaning she makes of her career. The internal career for these five participants is represented by (1) their positive self-definition which is anchored in cultural identity (2) their management of such definition by finding a safe space where they can reclaim any aspects of the constructed self which, by their perception, may have been threatened as a result of their interactional experiences, and (3) their fluid life structure and bicultural competency which allow them to successfully navigate their bicultural life worlds and to meet the expectations of both worlds.

Their external career, according to Schein (1993), refers to the actual steps that are required to progress through an occupation. The participants external career was facilitated by (1) their knowledge of the academic culture and its expectations, (2) socialization into the culture, which was facilitated by their mentoring relationships with significant members of the culture, and (3) visibility within the academic profession.

The women's career was found to be anchored in their self-definition. According to Schein (1993), "The career anchor is that one element in a person's self-concept that he or she will not give up, even in the face of difficult choices.... The anchor is the self-image" (p. 24). The women were found to have a strong sense of self, which was anchored in the Black culture. Their Black cultural identity can be considered as the one element that they would not give up, even if they were faced with difficult choices.

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The Relationship Between Selected Variables on Diversity and the Implementation of Diversity as Successful Corporate Culture Change Programs

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Demographers sounded the alarm in the late 1980s alerting corporations that by the year 2000 white males would make up only 45% of America's workforce. Companies concluded that they needed a way to manage multiculturalism and, as a result, workforce diversity program initiatives were born. The purpose of this study was to identify variables that are key to the successful implementation of diversity initiatives as culture change programs.

Keywords: Training Diversity, Diversity Backlash, Affirmative Action

As we approach the next millennium, major corporations are increasingly reliant upon a workforce that is more diverse in its composition of culture, ethnicity and gender. Consequently, the marketplace is being redefined along global lines which add complexities to the successful conduct of business. Many organizations across the American landscape are creating diversity programs for the purpose of properly responding to changing conditions in order to maintain or gain a competitive advantage (Beilinson, 1991; Cox, 1993; Gerber, 1990; Lamb, 1991, and Purnell and Tervalon, 1991). In an effort to prepare their employees to meet these challenges, major corporations have instituted workforce diversity programs. Rarely do we see a solution becoming the problem, but when improperly managed, workforce diversity programs can produce undesirable results. Negative results measured primarily in the form of backlash may be experienced by white males, females and/or minorities who may feel that diversity efforts unjustifiably neglect their needs and/or portray them in a less than positive light. These individuals may feel unjustifiably excluded or included in the workforce diversity initiative and may feel that there is a lack of organizational commitment to the diversity effort (Thomas, 1991).

Paradigm shifts in the composition of the workforce, emergence of a global marketplace and economy, and technological change, among others, are in combination prompting corporations in America to rethink their conduct of business (Fine, Johnson, and Ryan, 1990). Of paramount importance, is the challenge of harnessing the human resources potential of the workforce to service the needs of a clientele that increasingly is of equal or greater diversity (Griggs, 1995; Thomas, 1991, 1996).

Problem Statement and Theoretical Framework

Past research in the field of corporate diversity programs has yielded several questions relating to the future of such programs and the basis from which they can be guided. The external impact of diversity on the workplace is somewhat clear: however, the research findings are not nearly as conclusive with regard to the effect on employees within these organizations nor does it delineate how people can work together more effectively in order to cope with these changing realities (Marshall, 1995).

The review of the literature established that demographic changes occurring in the American workplace have profound implications for the way we think, feel and see the world around us and thus, how we will staff and govern organizations and businesses in both the near and distant future (O'Reilly, Caldwell, and Barnett, 1989). Many programs include EEO/Affirmative Action elements but one must note that diversity is not a synonym for affirmative action, nor is it a code word for equal employment opportunity (Thomas, 1991).

This study investigated the success of introducing diversity initiatives into organizations as cultural change programs within Fortune 250 companies. In actuality, this study was designed for the purpose of establishing the relationship between selected variables on diversity and the implementation of diversity as successful culture change programs. The research focused on corporate diversity implementation programs and incorporated a self-reporting questionnaire technique in order to determine the effect of such programs on the stated variables.

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Research Hypotheses

Based on the review of literature, what is known about industry practices, and the benchmarking exercise, the focus of this investigation was formalized in the following null hypotheses.

H_{01}: There is no relationship between the period of existence of workforce diversity programs and the level of diversity present in the workforce.

H_{02}: No relationship exists between the number of training hours and the extent of reported backlash.

H_{03}: No differences exist between IMPCR, IMPCI, IMPCUST, IMPEHS, IMPPROD, IMPACC, and IMPSUB and their impact on backlash.

H_{04}: No relationship exists between the inclusion of diversity management goals in managers' performance evaluation and reported backlash.

The following anacronyms may be defined as follows: community relations (IMPCR), company image (IMPCI), meet the needs of customers (IMPCUST), enhance employee skills (IMPEHS), increased productivity (IMPPROD), to provide access to wider skills and talents in the labor pool (IMPACC), and substitute for affirmative action (IMPSUB).

Methodology

Research Design

This survey research included testing hypotheses to identify the relationship of selected variables on diversity and the implementation of diversity as successful cultural change programs. The study was designed to answer four main research questions with the goal of contributing information to the body of knowledge regarding the successful implementation of diversity as cultural change programs.

Sample

The population for this study consisted of Fortune 250 companies. Fortune 250 companies represent the upper half of the 500 largest publicly traded United States firms published by Forbes Magazine which is a trademark for some of the largest industrial corporations in the United States. Companies included on the Fortune 500 list are those companies that are considered to be well-run organizations. The researcher chose Fortune 250 companies due to economic factors and ease of data collection and data processing.

Seventy-four (30%) of the Fortune 250 companies responded to the survey instrument. Fifty-one of these 74 respondents (68%) reported having implemented a workforce diversity program. These 51 companies had an average workforce of 32,467 employees. Most respondents held titles such as Vice President, Human Resources; Director, Human Resources; Manager, Diversity/EEO; Sr. Vice President, Corporate Diversity; or Director, Work Force Diversity.

Research Procedure

The questionnaire, which was developed for this investigation, was based on the findings of a "benchmarking activity". This benchmarking phase of the investigation included visits to five of the "best-in-class" corporations and a preliminary survey with 12 selected corporations. During this phase of the study the researcher was primarily interested in determining if a set of "best-in-class" variables existed that could be further studied and field-tested.

The questionnaire was developed in order to collect demographic information, information regarding components of diversity programs and how they are perceived, and information related to how diversity is being managed. Prior to the distribution of the final questionnaire, the content was analyzed by a panel of experts and the instrument was piloted with a group of 14 companies. The pilot study insured that all items could be interpreted by respondents and that the data collected could be suitably analyzed.

Each of the Fortune 250 companies were contacted by telephone in order to stimulate involvement. Next an introductory cover letter containing the purpose of the study, a request for cooperation, and a promise of anonymity was mailed to all companies. Respondents who chose to identify themselves were also promised a copy of the results of the study.

Pre-stamped, self-addressed envelopes were also provided with each survey. All surveys were mailed to an identified contact person with a request to return the survey within three weeks. Follow-up calls were made two

weeks after the initial mailing in order to remind participants to return the completed surveys. All 250 respondents were asked to complete the survey based on his/her knowledge of their organization and their workforce diversity program. Participating companies were also informed that questions 1 to 12 could be answered by all organizations, regardless of the implementation stage of their diversity initiative.

Data Analysis Procedures

Correlation analyses were used to test the first and second null hypotheses using the Pearson product moment correlation. Testing of the third null hypothesis required the use of multiple discriminant analysis with Box's M test and Wilkes' Lamda and univariate F ratios to determine the level of significance of individual variables (Hair, Anderson, and Black, 1995). The fourth null hypothesis was tested using chi-square.

Results and Conclusions

The results and conclusion of this study must be reviewed in light of the limitations of this investigation. The study only surveyed Fortune 250 corporations and did not focus on industry type. Furthermore, the study focused primarily on broad variables. Finally, the review of the literature indicated that this study is one of the first of its kind of this magnitude and that diversity initiatives are relatively new in American industries.

Results and Conclusions

Research Analysis

Fifty-one (68%) of the 74 respondents reported having implemented a workforce diversity program. Subsequently, all analyses were based on a sample size of N=51. The survey instrument instructed respondents to list the percentage of women and minorities currently working in one of three categories: management, professional jobs, and sales positions. Respondents were also instructed to use the standard EEO definitions when responding to the survey.

Correlation analysis was used to evaluate the relationship between period of existence of the workforce diversity program and the amount of diversity present in the organization. Using the Best-Kahn method (1986) for evaluating the magnitude of a correlation, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected in favor of the research hypothesis (for each workforce position) which indicates that a positive relationship exists between the period of existence of workforce diversity programs and the level of diversity present in the workforce for women and minorities.

This evidence suggests two possibilities: 1) given time, workforce diversity programs can be effective tools in influencing a more diverse workforce in terms of the employment of women and minorities in management, professional, and sales positions or 2) as the workplace becomes more diverse, workforce diversity programs are becoming more prevalent.

With regard to null hypothesis H_{02}, respondents were asked to indicate the level of backlash experienced as a result of having implemented a workforce diversity program from "not at all" to "a great extent". Backlash is defined as lack of commitment to the diversity effort which is most often associated with white males, females, and/or minorities as indicated by Thomas, 1991. Similarly, respondents were asked to indicate the number of diversity training hours provided to officials and managers, professionals, and sales workers. The data reported in Table 1 delineates the relationship between training hours and backlash.

Table 1
Correlation Analysis of Hours of Training and Backlash (N=51)

Workforce Population	Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient	Strength	Significance	Reject H_0
Officials & Managers	-.089	Negligible	.53	No
Professionals	.033	Negligible	.82	No
Sales	-.133	Negligible	.35	No

As indicated by the data in Table 1, this investigation failed to reject the three null hypotheses associated with the relationship between the number of workforce diversity training hours for officials and managers, professionals, and sales workers and reported backlash. Therefore, the null hypotheses of no relationship were retained. This is an indication that (for officials and managers, professionals and sales employees) an increase or decrease in the number of diversity training hours has no significant impact on the amount of reported backlash.

Null hypothesis H_{03}, relates to items in the survey instrument asking participants to state the importance of seven diversity issues related to the implementation of diversity programs. Participants were asked to rate the importance of the following variables with a rating of "1" being of low importance and a rating of "5" being of high performance, community relations (IMPCR), company image (IMPCI), meet the needs of customers (IMPCUST), substitute for affirmative action (IMPSUB), enhance employee skills (IMPEHS), increased productivity (IMPPROD), and to provide access to wider skills and talents in the labor pool (IMPACC). Since the dependent variable (backlash) was an ordinal variable and the independent variables were interval, discriminant analysis was utilized as the appropriate statistical technique.

Since the objective of this investigation was to determine which of the independent variables are the most efficient at discriminating between more and less backlash, a stepwise procedure was used. The Mahalanobis D^2 measure was used with the forward stepwise procedure. The stepwise procedure starts with all of the variables excluded from the model and selects the variable that maximizes the Mahalanobis distance between the groups (Hair, Anderson and Black, 1995). The Mahalanobis distance is a distance index between groups that take into consideration group variance-covariance structure. Variables were included in the model based on their discriminating powers. The results indicate that five variables entered the model and were the best discriminators based on their Wilks' Lamda values.

Because this is a four-group discriminant analysis model, three canonical discriminant functions are calculated to discriminate between the four groups. The data in Tables 2-4 indicates that function one is the only one with rho < .20. However, function one accounts for 62.89% of the variance.

Table 2
Summary of Stepwise Discriminant Analysis (N=51)

Step	Variable Entered	Wilk's Lambda	Between	Groups
1	IMPPROD	.90806	0	1
2	IMPSUB	.84928	1	2
3	IMPCI	.74361	0	1
4	IMPCUST	.69086	1	2
5	IMPEHS	.64551	0	1

Table 3
Canonical Discriminant Functions

Function	Percent Variance	Canonical Correlation	Significance
1	62.89	.4834	.1752
2	24.11	.3235	.4524
3	13.00	.2434	.4268

Table 4
Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients

	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3
IMPCI	.57	.63	-.02
IMPCUST	.44	-.60	-.00
IMPEHS	-.23	.04	1.14
IMPPROD	.75	-.36	-.44
IMPSUB	.44	.47	.16

The data indicates that the discriminant function achieves a high degree of classification accuracy with a hit ratio of 45.10% compared to a 25.0% chance ratio (1-4 categories of backlash). The final measure of classification accuracy is the Press's Q. It tests the statistical significance that the classification accuracy is better than chance (Hair, Anderson and Black, 1995). The calculated Press's Q value for this investigation is:

$$\text{Presses Q} = \frac{[51 - (45x^{2}}{51\,(4 - 1)} = 109$$

Since the chi-square critical value at the .001 level of significance is 10.827, the discriminant analysis can confidently be described as significantly predicting group membership.

An examination of the data in Tables 2-4 provides an indication that two variables [improve productivity (IMPPROD) and substitute for affirmative action (IMPSUB)] contribute somewhat in discriminating between groups. A closer look at function one indicates that the variable "to improve productivity" (IMPPROD) impacts heaviest on reported backlash (.75). Based on the significant improvements in classification accuracy, the investigator rejects the null hypothesis in favor of the research hypothesis which states that linking diversity to AAP will have a greater impact than other benefits/issues on the amount of reported backlash experienced in the workplace.

Finally, with regard to H_{04}, survey participants were asked to answer "yes" or "no" to the question: Is progress toward meeting workforce diversity goals included in a manager's performance evaluation? They were also asked to indicate the level of backlash resulting from their workforce diversity programs by checking one of the following levels: not at all, to a little extent, to some extent or to a great extent.

To test this null hypothesis, the investigator considered the variables under investigation were both nominal variables, one with more than two classification levels. A 2 x 4 contingency table was constructed and a chi-square distribution was employed as the statistical measure. Since the chi-square distribution is a non-parametric test, assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance are assumed to be adequate for this evaluation (Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh, 1985). The test statistic to be computed for the 2 x 4 contingency table is chi-square = 3 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the critical value of the test statistic is chi-square =7.815. The calculated statistic was nonsignificant, chi-square (3) = 4.57, rho > .05. The null hypothesis is retained, and the conclusion is that no relationship exists between inclusion of diversity management goals in a manager's performance evaluation and reported backlash. The evidence suggests that backlash is unaffected by whether or not diversity goals are included in managers' performance evaluations.

Summary

In summary, the research investigated provides a clear indication that there is a strong relationship between the level of diversity in the workforce and the maturity of workforce diversity programs. The results indicate that diversity training has little or no impact on the level of reported backlash which could be attributed to the quality of the training or the duration of the training.

Secondly, some diversity issues have a greater impact on the level of reported backlash than others with programs serving as a substitute for affirmative action and those that concentrate on improving productivity being the most likely discriminators. Finally, including diversity management in the managerial performance evaluation process does not increase nor decrease the level of reported backlash. At this point, including diversity in managers' performance evaluations appears to be a non-issue.

The literature indicates that there are three primary reasons why organizations faced with demographic changes undertake cultural diversity programs including affirmative action, valuing diversity, and that diversity is linked in important ways to organizational performance improvement. This study supports the theory that workforce diversity initiatives that are closely aligned with affirmative action initiatives are more likely to result in backlash than those that are aligned with managing diversity as a business necessity.

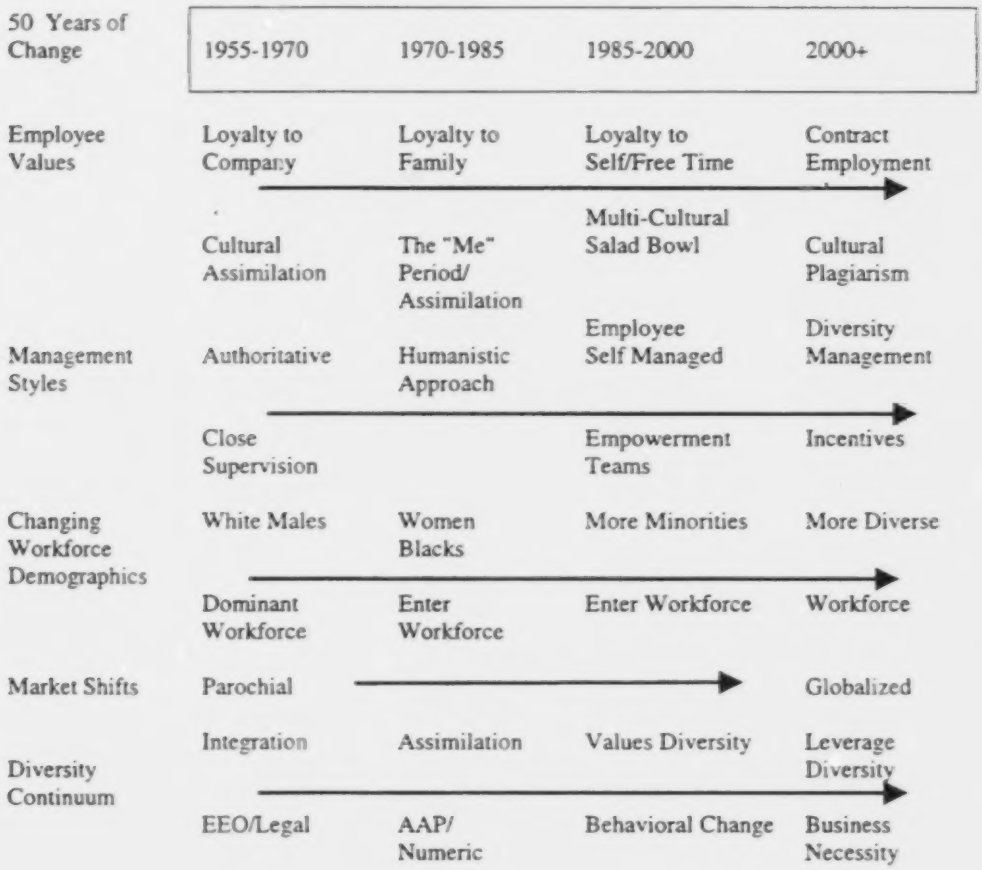

Figure 1: Diversity as business necessity

This investigation led to the development of a model (See Figure I) that views diversity as a business necessity. This model suggests that in most organizations management is responsible for maximizing investments in human and other capital. That is, it is management's responsibility to assure that goods and services are rendered at high quality levels while controlling for the cost of human (and other) capital. The actual measurement of the return on human capital may be accomplished in several ways. This model suggests the use of gross margins. Ideally, we would want gross margin per employee to increase with management interventions such as training, development, organizational change (centralized vs. decentralized services), technological breakthroughs, automation of manufacturing processes and systemic approaches to functional activities and diversity culture change programs. However, management's ability to implement many of these productivity initiatives is dependent on employees' ability to understand and function in a given environment and is heavily influenced by organizational culture and value systems. In order to be successful, companies must transmit a set of values that can be embraced at every level of the organization (Rhinesmith, 1993).

This model suggests that managers and organizational leaders' ability to increase the profitability of each employee is confounded by: changing management styles, shifting emphasis on employee rights, increased

workforce diversity, and changing employee value systems that may not be aligned with the value system of the organization.

Contribution to Knowledge in HRD

The scope of workforce diversity is enormous, covering all businesses and industries. The emphasis on managing diversity appears to be expanding as evidenced by the fact that 51 (68%) of the Fortune 250 companies participating in this study have appointed a department (or a portion of a department) to spearhead their workforce diversity initiative.

These findings, coupled with findings discussed in the review of literature, give rise to new and exciting implications in the area of workforce diversity programs. Individuals charged with the responsibility of implementing, funding, or enhancing current workforce diversity programs should gain valuable insights that will, hopefully, guide their efforts toward successful workforce diversity programs implementation.

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Diversity Practitioners—Learning From Experience! Defining the Role and Related Competencies in an Emerging Field of Practice.

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This paper provides a description of the process used to test the development and utility of a qualitative research model. The model was created as part of a doctoral dissertation, which explores the key experiences that represent the competency development process for diversity practitioners doing pioneering work in organizations. The paper argues that learning the requirements needed to perform in the role of diversity practitioner is a function of understanding the context, the relevant content, and the various processes associated with implementing diversity strategy.

Keywords: Diversity, Diversity Competencies, Diversity strategy

The dynamics of the new *global workspace* have resulted in the emergence of what some observers have called the *diversity industry* or the *diversity machine* (Judy & D'Amico, 1997; Lynch, 1997; Wheeler, 1995). Global markets with global corporations, producing global products and services by employees in global jobs characterize this emerging workspace. In addition, the projected diversification of the workforce, as both women and minorities enter the workplace in greater proportions, has fueled the rapid proliferation of many, often hastily prepared, diversity practitioners whose objective is to help organizations achieve the purported promise of diversity.

Problem Statement and Purpose

Problem Statement—Few comprehensive, well-structured studies on diversity practitioner competencies are present in the literature. Those reported tend to be part of research on broader diversity questions and issues. The emerging literature related to diversity is full of examples and models espousing linkages between productive diversity work climates and organizational effectiveness (Adler, 1986; Cox & Blake, 1991; Kanter, 1983; McLeod, Lobel, & Cox, 1991; Nemeth, 1985; Sandroff, 1988; Tannen, 1994, 1990; Triandis, Hall, & Ewen, 1965; Wright, Ferris, Hiller, & Kroll, 1995).

There is a growing body of literature presenting multiple perspectives for defining the meaning of diversity, as well as describing the various components of diversity in practice and related strategies for achieving its promise. In contrast, much of the literature that is available about diversity practitioners provide general categories with subjective descriptions of the practitioner's role. These categories are often based on quantitative survey research or the authors' conclusions drawn from actual experience (Baytos, 1995; Burkart, 1996; Carr-Ruffino, 1996; Cross, 1996; Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1993; Gant, 1996; Griggs & Louw, 1995; Wheeler, 1994, pp. 14-16).

Few of the authors writing about the role of diversity practitioners are explicit about the origins of their thinking, leaving the reader to accept their conclusions at face value. These general descriptions of qualifications and characteristics resulting from quantitative research or self-reports of practitioners provide a starting point for: (1) making selection and development decisions and (2) strategic planning and implementation; yet these descriptions lack the richness and detail that often result from qualitative, case study research.

Questions of quality control arise regarding the effectiveness of diversity practitioners, in part, because of the newness of the field. This researcher posits three additional explanations for quality control challenges in this emerging field of practice: (1) the role requirements are not clearly defined; (2) we don't specifically know what diversity practitioners' self-perceptions are or what they actually do in practice; and (3) there appears to be a lack of clarity as to why diversity practitioners engage in a given set of action strategies in terms of conceptual grounding.

Purpose Statement—This paper presents a research model that has been developed as part of dissertation study on diversity practitioners. The intent of the research model is to examine how the role requirements for diversity practitioners are evolving in practice; and to identify the competencies believed to be associated with effectiveness in the role.

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Research Question and Rationale

The core research question for the dissertation is:

> *What set of experiences reflect or represent the diversity practitioner's process of competency development? What are the resulting competencies?*

Given the context of the broader dissertation study, this paper responds to the question: *Can the research model presented identify the set of experiences that reflect the diversity practitioner's process of competency development?*

Rationale—Sixty-one percent of respondents to a Society for Human Resource Management survey indicated that diversity training is a "business necessity." This and other findings suggest that diversity training is increasingly becoming a part of the Human Resource Development (HRD) practitioner's responsibility. Just as the proposed benefits of workplace diversity initiatives are difficult to assess (especially quantitatively), so are the costs. One source estimates consulting fees ranging from $2,000 (per consultant for a one-day workshop) to well over $200,000 for a complete cultural assessment and diversity program (Lynch, 1997). These estimates do not include salaries and other expenses for internal personnel; nor the potential hidden costs associated with poor morale, conflict, and absenteeism that may result when diversity is not valued. The failure of an organization to create a productive diversity climate can also result in expensive litigation costs as a result of bias and discrimination claims.

Finally, there may be opportunity costs associated with diversity, for example a study of the Standard and Poors 500 Covenant Investment Management found that businesses committed to promoting diversity had an average annualized return on investment of 18.3 percent over a five-year period, compared with only 7.9 percent for those with the most shatter-proof glass ceilings (Recommendations of the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995, p.5). Diversity practitioners, both internal and external to the organization, often guide the design and implementation of diversity processes. It is this researcher's hope that the design of this study, and its findings, will make a positive contribution to Human Resource Development practitioners wishing to integrate diversity competence into their development platform.

Definitions of Terms and Key Concepts

Just what is a *diversity practitioner*? To answer this question, a number of terms and related concepts must be defined.

First, *What is the meaning of diversity*?—There are as many ways of defining this term as authors writing about the phenomenon. The literal meaning of diversity is the "condition of being different" (Webster). Taken in the context of the dynamic nature of human interaction, diversity can be defined as "unique mixtures characterized by similarities and differences" (Thomas, 1996). The *diversity as dimensions* framework provides a model for examining these unique mixtures of similarities and differences characteristic of human existence.

The primary dimensions of diversity encompass our inborn characteristics and other factors generally determined early in the life span. The elements (i.e., race, ethnicity, country of origin, gender, age, physical and mental ability, and sexual orientation) that make up the primary dimensions of diversity form an interdependent core of one's identity. People use these dimensions, often tacitly, when meeting others and determining "in-group" (others like us) and "out-group" (those who are different) status. *Secondary dimensions* of diversity can be viewed as mutable differences that we acquire, discard, and/or modify throughout our life-span and, as a result, are less salient to our core (e.g., education, occupation, income, parental status, etc.). *Organizational dimensions* of diversity resulting from our work roles are influenced by such factors as organizational level, classification (i.e., exempt, hourly, etc.), line of business, work content, location (e.g., corporate vs. field office), and union affiliation. The sum total of the three dimensions of diversity shape our identities as people, the frame or lens through which we view, experience, and act in the world. In short, diversity includes ALL OF US!

Second, *What is diversity in the workplace*?—Two watershed events served to place diversity on the radar screen in Corporate America. The first was the Hudson Institute's landmark study entitled "Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century" (Johnston & Packer, 1987) which highlighted a number of changes in America's workforce, mainly workplace demographics and a perceived "skills gap" between what a well-educated labor force needs to compete in a global economy and what skills they process.

The other was an article in The Wall Street Journal's Corporate Women column pointing out the invisible and impenetrable barrier between women and the executive suite, preventing them from reaching the highest levels of the business world regardless of their accomplishments and merits. Table 1 below presents five common organizational responses to diversity in the workplace.

Each approach differs along a number of key variables such as goals, motives, focus, benefits, and challenges. The primary driver for *Equal Employment Opportunity* (EEO) *and Affirmative Action* in organizations is legal compliance, therefore this approach focuses on racial and gender representation, in addition to other protected classes of employees, in all facets of employment. The *understanding differences* approach places its emphasis on interpersonal relationships across the various primary, secondary, and organizational dimensions of diversity.

The *valuing diversity* approach explores the extent to which a workforce composed of people with diverse, cultural backgrounds constitutes a valuable resource in helping corporations meet the demands of operating in today's global and multicultural business environment (Herbst, 1997). *Managing diversity* takes on a managerial perspective and focuses on the full utilization of the entire workforce regardless of difference. *Leveraging diversity* is a comprehensive strategy building on the previous four approaches. Leveraging diversity focuses on measuring the impact or outcomes of capitalizing on the talent of a diverse workforce (e.g., customer satisfaction ratings and successful penetration of diverse market segments).

Table 1
Organizational Approaches to Diversity in the Workplace

EEO & Affirmative Action	Understanding Differences	Valuing Diversity	Managing Diversity	Leveraging Diversity

Lastly, *What is a diversity practitioner*?—Each of the five approaches presented in Table 1 require movement within an organization at three levels; individual, group, and system. To varying degrees, each approach requires learning and change. First we must learn about the various cultural patterns that guide behavior in organizations and then we must work to change certain aspects of organizational culture to enhance effectiveness in inter-cultural and multi-cultural contexts. Diversity practitioners, while they differ in exact role requirements, work to assist organizations achieve their objectives by designing, developing, and implementing diversity interventions.

The Research Model and Analysis Process

The research model—this study applies a four-phase research process: (1) literature review and conceptual framework; (2) pre-interview data inventory/critical incident form sent to the study participants before the scheduled interview; (3) a 90-minute audio-taped semi-structured interview schedule; and (4) an emerging coding scheme/conceptual framework. I tested this model as part of the first round of my dissertation study with ten noted diversity "experts." *What constitutes a diversity expert?* In this study, an individual who contributes to and whose work is cited frequently in the literature on workplace diversity was considered an expert.

The diversity container framework—This framework (presented in Table 3) was used to transform the large volume of data in the literature on diversity into information. The result: (1) a catalog of the various ways diversity is defined in the literature; (2) descriptions of five approaches to addressing diversity in the workplace; and (3) content areas to explore using a pre-interview data inventory with "expert" research participants. The interview schedule applied during this study was designed to build on the findings from the literature review and pre-interview data inventory analysis by exploring the meaning practitioners (or experts) attribute to the experience of doing pioneering diversity work in organizations.

The expert interview schedule—Structured interviews were conducted in three parts: (1) Self-Q, that is soliciting questions that experts would ask internal diversity practitioners if they were conducting this study; (2) a series of open-ended questions about their role requirements as a diversity practitioner and the related competencies; and (3) reflective questions on the meaning the experts attribute to their diversity work (including generating two personal critical incident examples). The content and process of the expert interview schedule is presented in Table 2.

The analysis of the expert interview data—the process used to make meaning from the expert interview process included the following steps:

1. researcher review of interview transcripts (reading) with audio tape to ensure accuracy and to note follow-up clarifying questions;
2. research participants review of interview transcript and field notes (1st round member check);
3. researcher and participant address clarifying questions during follow-up telephone conversation;
4. researcher complete second pass noting emergent themes on margins of each transcript (focused on what Patton 1990, calls "indigenous concepts");
5. researcher complete third pass using the diversity container framework (compared literature with practice descriptions);
6. researcher use of Nudist qualitative research software to auto-code transcripts based on pre-interview data inventory demographics and sort transcripts by each key interview question from the structured interview guide (see Table 2); and
7. researcher develop case descriptions (or what Seidman, 1991 calls thematic presentations in third person descriptive style as suggested by Patton, 1990 & Merriam, 1988) for each participant (i.e., participant profile, definition of diversity, description of diversity approach including intended outcomes, and summary of key themes emerging from the critical incident segment) and distribute to each research participant for review and comment (2nd round member check).

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Table 2
Expert Interview Schedule

Part 1: Questions	*Rationale/Probes*
It is evident that you are an expert on your own view of what constitutes success in this role. Therefore, to start, what I would like to do is have you ask yourself questions about the role of a successful diversity practitioner, the competencies needed to operate in the role, and how best to acquire such competencies. Please do not answer these questions, simply pose them as if you where interviewing someone else. While you are asking these questions, I will be recording verbatim and writing them down the best that I can capture them. If at any time you feel that you want to review what I have written, feel free to do so...Please, let's begin by asking the first question	Process Note: list the questions and review with participant; when the participant runs out of questions, inquire as to why this list of questions.
Part 2: Questions Q1. *How do you define diversity? Why?* Q.2. *What do you see as the primary role and related responsibilities of diversity practitioners? Why?* <u>Role</u> <u>Responsibilities and Tasks</u> Q3. *What theoretical orientations or frameworks, if any, do you use to guide your practice* (interventions) *and why*? (content and premise reflection) Q4. *What specific skills, knowledge domains, and practices do you think successful diversity practitioners* (including yourself) *apply during their* (your) *work that have contributed to what you would consider to be exemplary diversity process outcomes in organizations* (i.e., competencies)? *Why?* Q5. *How do they (you) learn about the theory and practice of workplace diversity?*	*Rationale/Probes* Meaning the expert/practitioner attributes to the concept of diversity grounded in the belief that one's assumptions about the meaning of diversity will influence action strategies and approaches to the work. Engage the expert in context, content, & premise reflection (Mezirow, 1991). Understand the linkage between theory and practice (content and premise reflection) Content, conduct, and premise reflection. Direct questions about preparation and key experiences; how the learning is achieved in terms of strategy--formal, informal, intentional, or incidental; aim of learning)

Table 2 (continued)
Expert Interview Schedule

Part 3: Questions	*Rationale/Probes*
Q6. Now, I would like you to reflect on the meaning of your experience; that is, *What sense do you make of the experience of doing diversity work?*	Meaning making/learning from experience/reflecting on experience
Q7. *Given what you have said about the role of diversity practitioners, and the related competencies; where do you see yourself going in the future with this work and why?*	Forecasting on the future direction of diversity work/related requirements/implications for future competencies.
Q8. *Can you think of any "ah ha" experiences that caused you to rethink elements of your practice? If so, what are they? Why critical? Impact on practice?*	Learning from experience
Q9. *What are some examples of what you would consider exemplary practice in your experience* (or others) *as a diversity practitioner?*	Probes: What was the situation? Trigger? Intent or desired outcome? Hopes? Players? What was your role? Strategies/tactics? Actions? Why? Thoughts? Feelings? High-point? Low point? Outcomes? Results? Measure? Compare to initial intent? Have your views about what's important in diversity work changed as a result of this experience? About what constitutes effective practice? What would you do different next time, if anything? Why? What were your learnings as a result of this experience? What advice would you give to someone facing a similar situation?)

After completing this process with four expert participants (i.e., analysis steps 1-7), I conducted an inter-rater reliability session with two other colleagues in my dissertation cohort. A preliminary coding scheme for the study resulted from this process (see Table 5 and Table 6). This process resulted in the creation of an analytic framework to apply during the balance of the study presented in the preliminary findings segment of this article. This researcher claims the preliminary results are trustworthy based on design features such as (1) multiple round member check strategy; (2) triangulation of the data including primary source interviews, researcher observation, comparing themes emerging from primary sources with secondary sources; and (3) colleague inter-rater sessions.

Theoretical Foundation

This researcher's paradigmatic assumptions align with constructivism, that is a belief that the meaning of diversity is a human construction (Lincoln, 1990, pp. 67-87). This paradigm assumes that "what is known" about diversity or its reality, "exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them" (Guba, 1990, p. 27). This implies in order to understand the requirements and related competencies associated with the role of the diversity practitioner the researcher (or inquirer) must interact directly with the participants (or the inquired) to co-create meaning. For this reason, a number of the diversity "experts" found in the literature were requested to participate in the first phase of the study.

The diversity container brings together three philosophical schools of thought in analyzing the performance and role of diversity practitioners including (1) structuralism or *context;* (2) phenomenology, or *content;* and (3) behavioralism, or *conduct* (Jackson, 1991, p. 38). In addition, the container was used to develop data collection and analysis tools. Table 3 presents the seven core questions that make up the diversity container.

Context—Placing the concept in a historical context can enhance our understanding of the diversity movement as a phenomenon. As demonstrated in Table 4, the evolution from *Affirmative Action* (AA) to *Workplace Diversity* can be positioned as representing a paradigm shift in our thinking about, and reacting to, a variety of individual

differences in this country over the span of four decades (Baytos, 1995; Carr-Ruffiono, 1996; Cox, 1993; Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1994, & 1993; Griggs & Louw, 1997; and Thomas, 1996).

Content—Surveying a number of the definitions of diversity in the literature, as well as those generated by this research, one of two components, or both, are embedded in the various ways of expressing the meaning of the concept: (1) as a *dimension* (or group of dimensions); and (2) as an *action* or *process* (i.e. acknowledging, understanding, and valuing differences; effectively managing and leveraging differences). In short, both theorists and practitioners conceptualize diversity as a *subject* (the "what") and/or a *verb* (the "how") capturing both static characteristics as well as dynamic processes.

Table 3: The Diversity Container
Critical Literature Review: Core Exploration Questions

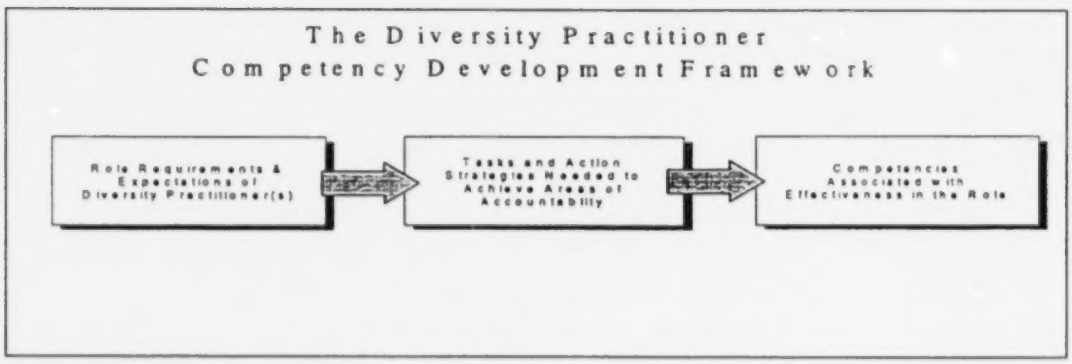
Element	**Context** *(The "Where & When" in time, place, & history; & Why)*	**Content** *("The What")*	**Conduct** *(The "How")*
Philosophy	Structuralism	Phenomenology	Behavioralism
Focal Questions	*Q.1: Why bother? What's the basic premise for diversity work?* *Q. 2:How do theorists and practitioners position the "business case" for diversity?* *Q. 3: What historical origins influence an author's thinking regarding diversity in the United States?*	*Q. 4: How are theorists and practitioners defining diversity?* *Q. 5: What are the key models or conceptual frameworks used to guide professional practice?*	*Q. 6: What resources or interventions are recommended by theorists and practitioners to do diversity work* (i.e., how do they translate theory into practice)?
Q. 7: How do theorists and practitioners define success (i.e., what are the expected results or outcomes)?			

Table 4: The Evolution of the Diversity Movement
Four Decades of Change

1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s
Era of Civil Unrest & Social Action	*Era of Affirmative Action & Tension*	*Era of Inclusion*	*Era of Cultural Transformation*

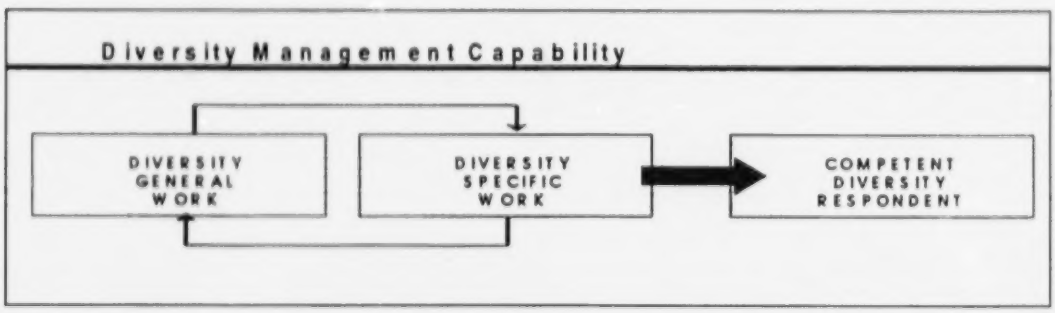
Conduct—Contextual and content elements of the diversity container frame the nature and form of the actions taken by diversity practitioners in the service of achieving workplace diversity objectives. The Diversity Practitioners Competency Development Framework below graphically demonstrates the approach applied in this study to gain an understanding of the process used for clarifying role-related competencies. The interview guide presented in Table 2 was designed by combining the three elements of the diversity container with the competency development framework. The collective insights gained by applying the diversity container resulted in the following working definition for the competency development process for diversity practitioners.

The process of learning, grounded in experience, that contributes to the diversity practitioner's ability to develop effective responses to the challenges, complexity, and opportunities associated with the role.


The Diversity Practitioner
Competency Development Framework
Role Requirements & Expectations of Diversity Practitioner(s)
Tasks and Action Strategies Needed to Achieve Areas of Accountability
Competencies Associated with Effectiveness in the Role

Preliminary Findings

The key preliminary finding emerging from this study is that the learning agenda for the development of a managing diversity capability involves a continuous interplay between diversity-general work and diversity-specific work (Hayles & Russell, 1997, p. 129; Hayles 1997-98; Thomas, 1996). Diversity-general work focuses on providing a context for diversity-specific work. In this way, diversity-general work builds the foundation needed to achieve the desired outcomes of any diversity-specific intervention. The ultimate aim of cycling back and forth between diversity-general and diversity-specific activities is to develop the capacity to construct competent responses to the challenges, complexity, and opportunities associated with situations involving diversity.



Diversity-General Work—Diversity-general work provides a foundation for a comprehensive diversity strategy and change process. In other words, this work should be a requirement for any diversity initiative or intervention. While necessary, diversity-general work is not sufficient for the organizational and cultural change needed to transform the complexity, conflict, and tension often associated with situations involving diversity to a source a competitive advantage. The activities associated with diversity-general work can be grouped into six clusters as displayed in Table 5. This insight resulted in a framework for analyzing the expert and later the internal diversity practitioner interview data.

First, conceptual clarity answers the question—*What is diversity?* Contextual awareness situates the diversity movement in its historical context and examines how various socioeconomic trends have placed diversity on the social, political, and organizational agenda in United States. In this way, contextual awareness work answers the "where, when," and to some degree the "why" of diversity.

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To achieve sustainable change both the business case for diversity and one's personal rationale for engaging in the diversity management process must be clarified. There are a number of relevant models and theories which serve as guideposts to effectively applying diversity management in organizations (i.e., theoretical basis) that are part of the foundation of developing a managing diversity capability.

Foundational knowledge and skill go beyond defining diversity to working to understand and apply a set of basic concepts for influencing human behavior in organizations—the essence of diversity work. Finally diversity is not a spectator sport—it requires personal engagement. For this reason, a key element of diversity-general work is self-awareness.

Diversity-Specific Work—A key challenge for a practitioner during the early phases of the diversity management process is deciding where to start. There is often confusion around the need to position diversity inclusively and the complexity associated with trying to effectively address the multiple dimensions of diversity at once. What is clear is that if a practitioner or an organization were to attempt to address the infinite number of differences characteristic of human existence, very little, if any sustainable change would occur. In fact, most people (and organizations) would to get lost in the complexity. For this reason, after building a foundation with diversity-general work, it is necessary to then select one or more dimensions of diversity to apply the learning. That is, transform that learning into action. Table 6 presents the analytical tool that will be used to assess diversity-specific work in organizations.

Table 5: Six Clusters of Diversity-General Work in Organizations

Clusters	*Cognitive Domain* (Knowledge Areas—Head Work)	Behavioral Domain (Skill Areas—Hand Work)	Affective Domain (Attributes—Heart work)
Contextual Awareness	e.g., historical origins of dive movement	e.g., transforming practices, systems, & structures	e.g., accepts political realities of change agent
Conceptual Clarity	e.g., various definitions of diversity; classification schemes	e.g., argument skills—justifying, analyzing, & constructing positions	e.g., personal work around how prejudice and other assumptions impact the work
Business Connection/Case	e.g., macro-economic trends/understanding drivers	e.g., strategy development, measuring the impact	e.g., long term perspective
Theoretical Basis	e.g., Bennet's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity; Organization Behavior	e.g., administering, analyzing, and providing IDI feedback	e.g., constant pursuit to clarify one's philosophical orientation regarding diversity work
Foundational Knowledge and Skills	e.g., Workplace Diversity Process; OD; OT; and Adult Learning Theory.	e.g, diagnostic skills—applying FK during CAs, ORAs, TNAs, etc.	e.g., reflective practitioner, continuous learning/ balance challenge & support
Self-awareness and Self-work	e.g., learning style, facilitation style, consulting style, life history	e.g., administer & interpret various self-awareness instru.s	e.g., viewing self as instrument of change

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Table 6: Diversity-Specific Work in Organizations			
Clusters	*Cognitive Domain* (Knowledge Areas—Head Work)	Behavioral Domain (Skill Areas—Hand Work)	Affective Domain (Attributes—Heart work)
Intercultural Communications/ Relations (interactions bet. 2 cultures)			
Multicultural Work (greater than two cultures)			
Gender Diversity			
Ethnicity/Racism			
Physical/Mental Ability			
Sexual Orientation			
Age/Generational Diversity			
Acquisitions and mergers			
Functional Diversity in Organizations			
Lines of Business/Product Lines			
Union/non-union Membership			
Globalism			
Market Diversity			

Summary

While the results are preliminary, the early findings emerging from this Diversity Practitioner Competency Study support the utility of the qualitative case study research model to examine a sample of acting participants in this emerging field of practice. The results from the expert sample align heavily on the diversity-general side of the two dimension analytical framework presented in the preliminary findings section of this article. Early analysis using transcripts from the "internal practitioner" sample appears to provide more details on the diversity-specific side of the framework, this may be due to, in part, the specific, and task oriented nature of internal practitioners. The experts in this study are authors, consultants, and advisors to internal practitioners.

The methodology described herein, and the process in which conference attendees assigned to this symposium will participate, will make a strong contribution to the trustworthiness of the broader dissertation study on Diversity Practitioner Competencies.

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